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ABSTRACT

This study is part of a regional study in industrial South Wales on the determinants of participation and non-participation in post-compulsory education and training, with special reference to processes of change in the patterns of these determinants over time and to variations between geographical areas. The study combines contextual analysis of secondary data about education and training providers with a regional study of several generations of families in South Wales (a door-to-door survey of 1,104 representative householders), semi-structured interviews, and taped oral histories conducted in 1996-97. This study uses brief accounts from the interviews to examine the social determinants of adult participation and training as identified in earlier papers (Working Papers 7 and 9). The individuals' participation in adult learning is defined in this study within an empirically derived typology of learning trajectories. Treating these types as a dependent variable, the analysis identifies age, cohort, period, and location effects as well as considering their relationships to other variables such as respondent characteristics, personal and societal opportunities, and economic conditions. The study found that the most important determinants of participation in further education are time and place. The study concluded that ameliorating inequalities in society could make alternative learning trajectories available to more people, and it is worth doing, even if economic benefits do not accrue. (Contains 42 references.) (KC)

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A Cardiff and Bristol University ESRC- funded Learning Society Project

WORKING PAPER 11

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Background

This project, funded by the ESRC as part of the Learning Society Programme, is a regional study in industrial South Wales of the determinants of participation and non-participation in post-compulsory education and training, with special reference to processes of change in the patterns of these determinants over time and to variations between geographical areas. The study combines contextual analysis of secondary data about education and training providers with a regional study of several generations of families in South Wales via survey, semi-

structured interviews and taped oral histories. The background to the study is further described in Rees *et al.* (1997). The study took place in three markedly different centres in industrial South Wales during 1996 and 1997.

The data were obtained via a door-to-door survey of 1,104 householders representing a systematic stratified sample of the population of industrial South Wales in the age range 15-65. The life, work and educational histories from the householders and their families were used to define characteristic training or learning trajectories. All differences and relationships described are significant at the 5% level, using omnibus chi-squared, t-tests, one-way analysis of variance, or Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance as appropriate. Logistic regression was used to confirm a set of eleven characteristic lifetime learning trajectories. For convenience, a summary of the trajectories is repeated in Table 1.

Table 1
Frequency of each trajectory

Category	Trajectory	Frequency
Non-participant	Non-learner	14%
	Near non-learner	19%
Delayed learner	Delayed trainee	10%
	Deferred student	7%
	Twilight learners	1%
Transitional learner	False-start trainee	9%
	False-start student	8%
Immature learner	Still at school	1%
	Still in f/t education	4%
Lifetime learner	Work-based learner	13%
	Early learner	17%

Introduction

This working paper uses brief accounts from the depth interviews carried out in the third wave of the project to illustrate, expand, and in some cases query the social determinants of adult participation in education and training as identified in Working Papers 7 and 9. It therefore tackles some of the issues for further investigation suggested by Taylor and Spencer (1994). The individuals' participation in adult learning are defined in this study within an empirically derived typology of learning trajectories. Treating these types as a dependent variable, the analysis identifies age, cohort, period and location effects as well as considering their relationships to other variables such as:

- i. the characteristics of the respondent - e.g. sex, age, class, ethnicity, education, attainment
- ii. their personal opportunity structure - the nature of their jobs and employers
- iii. their socially constructed opportunity structure
- iv. the nature of their previous learning experience - quality of past training, learner identity
- v. the objective general opportunity structure - local labour markets, economic conditions, supply and travel.

These factors may or may not lead the investigators to the supposed dimensions underlying decisions about learning of the kind described by others, such as social context, choice of lifestyle and transformations of identity (Hodkinson et al. 1996). In terms of career trajectories, since the transition to work is not seen as a one-off event leading to a knowable future, some writers have argued that the process is 'not really that determinist' (as though it were possible to have degrees of determinism) since lives can contain multiple turning points - epiphanies - and

disconcerting episodes (Hodkinson *et al.* 1996). However, the existence of many discernible status changes, such as the end of compulsory education, retirement, redundancy, bereavement, injury, marriage, leaving home, and exam failure does not necessarily mean that each one is less predictable than a simpler account of transition to work. The prediction may simply be more difficult. What is perhaps really described here is akin to a model of scientific revolutions - 'turning points' like paradigm shifts are interspersed with routine (or normal science). Unfortunately since the same authors suggest that the routine can either consolidate the previous decision or contradict it leading to stress and another 'revolution', their thesis becomes impossible to test.

Other observers emphasise how much of the life course can be predicted by early events. For example, family class background and initial education explain a substantial and reasonably constant amount of the variance in proneness to unemployment throughout the working life (Gershuny and Marsh 1994). Most end up trying to marry the two accounts. Many people may have a general interest in continuing their education, and some have a life plan that includes education at all costs, while some might wish to cease their education as soon as possible. This is described by Gambetta (1987) as their proneness to continue. People's plans to continue education may be filtered by constraints, for example the law requires some education, while extended education may involve an impossible sacrifice for the poor. For most decisions, the constraints can be represented as a cost. Whether a certain level of cost can be met is a function of one's proneness. However, where constraints become binding, the explanatory function of an individual's intentionality disappears.

Similarly in discussing career choices, Hodkinson et al. (1996) state that they prefer to use the term careership to trajectory which is unduly determinist, but do not see decisions as simply based on 'rational choices' since careers are often serendipitous as much as guided or planned, in the sense that an individual cannot control their gender or class background. For example, male working-class culture may have been more about collective solidarity than individual choice (see Gorard *et al.* 1997a). Some women, perhaps especially from Moslem families may see choices as being made for them by family or family interests. Choices are also affected by "horizons for action", a view of what might be deemed appropriate for 'someone like me', which can both enable and restrict. Choices can be extended by influence or privilege, or assessed by knowledge in terms of knowledge of the past, for example by looking at Training Credits in terms of YTS (also see Gorard 1997a). People generally only consider a segment of the full objective choice open to them, and the form of that segment can be constrained by social factors (termed determinants in the present study) such as class or gender (boys do not often consider being a nanny for example).

Trying to decide between an explanation based on choice and one based on determinism is something of a red-herring. Either explanation or one involving both is possible, and each is a direct alternative for the other. People's patterns of participation may be determined by prior (and future) events in their lives, or these events may simply create a personal culture that colours the objective opportunity structure in such a way that people's choices are frequently predictable. Unless it can be shown that the situation cannot be explained in terms of either choice and causation, then explanations based upon both mechanisms at the same time are clearly unnecessary, and arguments about which contributes more to the outcomes become obscure and unparsimonious (cf. Hebb's

rectangle).¹ In fact, rather than two mechanisms of agency, choice and constraint can be seen as two differing descriptions of social processes, both helpful and both valid. The first appears more naturally when analysing the interview data as narratives, while the second appears more naturally when the survey data is viewed in terms of predictive models. In the same way that Simpson's paradox is only an apparent paradox, to view learning trajectories as individual accounts is not to deny that they are patterned in a wider perspective, and to characterise those patterns does not negate the varied experiences of the individuals involved. Philosophically the two accounts, though apparently in surface appearance, may be regarded as eliminatively identical.

Accordingly, the task of describing either choices or determinants is a difficult one. Training (and educational) placements are usually the result of negotiation between several people, not a simple choice by one person (Greenhalgh and Stewart 1987, Coffield 1996b), and there is interaction with other 'stakeholders' in the decision (Hodkinson et al. 1996). To a large extent, the characteristics of those who participate or do not participate in education and training are cross-sectional, rather than clearly causal. What is needed is knowledge of how the trajectory of each individual interacts with their personal history and general economic historical events (cf. Gershuny and Marsh 1994). This could be achieved by a longitudinal design (the demerits of which are described in Gorard *et al.* 1997b). In this study it was achieved by collecting retrospective life histories of the respondents, tied to secondary histories of the specific areas in which they lived and learned. In addition, all analyses were performed in several stages, in historical order and using only that information knowable about each individual at that time. Even this careful analysis may exhibit misplaced trust in forward-looking causal models, since there is evidence that people can use future

expectations as a constraint in present choice (Gambetta 1987). People may take into account not only their real options but the expected probability of the success of each (e.g. working-class individuals may be more cautious in staying on at school).

The general determinants of participation

The general determinants of lifetime learning, as proposed by this study, have been described elsewhere (Gorard et al. 1997c), and they include gender, family background, initial schooling, occupation and motivation. However, the most significant factors may be summarised as time and place. Their significance lies as much in their interactions with the other variables as in themselves. Where and when an individual is determines their structure of opportunities such as access to courses, but it also determines the relevance of gender, family background, initial schooling, occupation and motivation in mediating those objective opportunities. For example, the apparent appropriateness of higher education for a women depends to a large extent on when and where she is.

Place and time affect the opportunities available to people, and these opportunities are key to an understanding of participation and non-participation. One cannot for example, ask why someone did not take an option that was non-existent at the time (cf. Gambetta 1987). Similarly, one cannot really ask why someone did not take an option that was non-existent in the place that they lived or were able to travel to. "Patterns of participation in adult learning are strongly related to educational advantage and to age, but also vary significantly across regions of Great Britain" (Sargant 1996, p.197). In reality, place is not as fixed as time since

the individual can move, but the population in this study is relatively fixed and few people have moved considerable distances in their lives. In fact, the concept of mobility, for those families able and prepared to move, is crucial to patterns of participation (see below).

Age

The age of respondents, and therefore the periods at which they left school or moved jobs, is a major determinant of participation. Generally, the frequency of participation in formal education or training has increased over the 50 year period of the study. More respondents in each generation report staying-on in school or college after school-leaving age (even though, or perhaps because, this age has also increased twice during the same period). More respondents in each generation also report work-based training (although this may be a recency-of-recall effect). It should be borne in mind that episodes of training vary in length and there is some evidence that recent increases in the number of reported training events are accounted for in large part by very short courses. This, coupled with the relative novelty of the qualification, may partly explain why older people are less likely to take NVQs (Shackleton and Walsh 1997). The finding is not a clear confirmation of the human capital theory prediction that 'investment' in training will decrease with age since participation may be as much period as age-related. Similarly, even the apparent age effect may be an indication that employers feel there is a reduced need to train people with existing skills, those with several previous jobs perhaps (Tan and Peterson 1992).

Formal participation does decrease with age (cf. Greenhalgh and Stewart 1987) but age is not a simple linearly increasing determinant of participation in the region of study which has witnessed a dramatic boom, bust and retrenchment in

the past 50 years (Gorard 1997b). For example, it may be that adverse economics have more impact on the employment prospects of younger cohorts at any period (cf. Gershuny and Marsh 1994). The training and socialisation available in the three local nationalised industries - coal, steel and rail - have disappeared along with lifetime job opportunities for many. Therefore, this study is in agreement with Gershuny and Marsh (1994) that the effect of time is an important one for the dependent variable (in this case training, in their case unemployment) but that the effect of time varies for each birth cohort. Even where the working lives of two individuals overlap, they may have an age-related differential proneness to participation in training.

Place

The importance of place in understanding the determinants of adult participation has been argued elsewhere (Gorard 1997b, Rees *et al.* 1997). Empirically, place has so far been found to play three roles in this study. Firstly, Wales is different in many ways to other regions of the UK - against the national trend it has a decreasing proportion of the workforce who are self-employed, and a lower proportion of job-related training than every region of England outside the east Midlands for example (DfEE 1997b). Similarly, the chances of participating in government employment and training programmes, and hence the chances of taking NVQs, have regional variations (Shackleton and Walsh 1997). This has to be taken into account when examining the frequency of training episodes. Secondly, in much the same way as Daines *et al.* (1982) found differences between their six research sites, there are clear differences between patterns of participation in the three Welsh research sites, with Neath Port Talbot coming closer to the ideal of a learning 'community' whose members have a more widespread participation in formal lifelong learning, and Blaenau Gwent offering

fewer and fewer chances for job-related training. Thirdly, participation, especially later in life, is more common for individuals and their families who have moved into the research sites from elsewhere. There may be two processes at work here - trained and educated individuals are more likely to be part of a nation-wide occupational labour market and have to move with their jobs, while those who are prepared to countenance moving to get a job are also more likely to enrol in courses.

Most respondents in this study are local, having been born and educated in South Wales. All of the cases described in this section are local, and they reveal the influence of geography in two main ways. Those who had been away were more likely to participate in later learning. Partly this is a function of occupational class and educational attainment for those in national labour markets, or who had been to university in England. However, since most respondents had not left South Wales, the biggest influence of place was a direct one based upon the availability of local opportunities for education and job-related training (mainly in steel and coal for men at the start of period under study). These opportunities have clearly changed over time. The restructuring of local employment opportunities - the trends towards services, assembly, female employment, and contingent working - is one clear example (Gorard 1997b). In general, employees no longer have the training (or the danger) associated with the nationalised industries, and the places are more frequently temporary, or part-time and have in the main been taken up by women. One man (G759), now in his 40s and unemployed after temporary work in a factory, left school at 15:

I went into the coalmines [like all his school friends], but that was closed then in 1969. I had an accident just before it shut.... and it was while I was out that Llanhilleth shut, and everybody was transferred to other pits.

Asked why he had never taken part in any voluntary courses or leisure interests:

I'm not brainy enough I suppose.... Well, I never looked to be honest.

He was clear that most of the jobs he was likely to encounter required no special skills or training, and equally clear that there was little point in learning except for a job.

To some extent the local views of the value of training are clarified by a Training for Work Manager in one of the research sites:

People can't move out of the area, to Newport for example because of the house prices, and there is no public transport at night or early morning for shift workers, so unless they have a good car people can't commute.... Bosch, Sony, and Panasonic are always advertising for jobs, as their workers leave through boredom with the conveyor belt production. But they go on to another similar job hoping it will be less boring, or to benefit, and not to training [except for the limited induction training accompanying the new job].

Some jobs have two hundred plus applicants if they are reasonable, and so applicants are thrown out if they are overqualified, or underqualified, even if they have been doing the job elsewhere for twenty years. Bosch recently

selected for a job like this but still had two hundred plus applicants left in the pile, and used things like height as criteria for selection.... There is a trend away from reliance on qualifications to ability and experience, but often it comes down to who you know, not what. People are taken as temps for trial before the job is advertised.

I was a returner at the age of 26, did not want to work in a factory. In the valley others often just drift along and think why bother. You need a good car to work elsewhere, and you stay because the nuclear [*sic*] family is still important here, with grandparents helping with child care. Abergavenny is 14 miles and it takes two hours by bus, so you need a good car. I live in Ebbw Vale and I hate people from Tredegar, while Newport is a foreign land. The brighter ones from here go to university and simply don't come back. People say "I left school at 16, picked up money shovelling, you did As and you're unemployed and he went to university and now works in a cracker factory". We had four graduates on a course recently who had been away and come back. Quite odd. They were refreshing but the only thing we could offer them was IT.

Gender

Although the significance of gender changes over the period of this study, it remains one of the clearest determinants of participation throughout, affecting not merely the frequency and length of learning episodes but also their type and outcomes. In general, women were more likely to be non-participants from the 1940s to the 1970s, and have been more likely to be transitional learners since. Women have traditionally been under-represented at every level of learning above initial education (cf. Hopper and Osborn 1975).

Part of this difference is related to differences in the pattern of work and the training opportunities that ensue. Men are still twice as likely as women to work full-time (DfEE 1997b), perhaps because of child-care. In general, women without children are more likely to have jobs, while for women with children their employment cycle is job, family, workforce re-entry (Gershuny and Marsh 1994). Most training is full-time for those working full-time, and so is more common for men, and single women (Greenhalgh and Stewart 1987), and episodes are also longer for the same groups. In fact married women who receive full-time training show a net movement out of the workforce, so that those without any training actually increased from 1965 to 1975. More women are now working (economic activity up from 57% of those aged 16-59 in 1971 to 71% in 1995), while fewer men are (a drop from 91% to 85% over the same period). However, the rise in employment has been chiefly in part-time posts (DfEE 1996c), which are less likely to lead to training and qualification (Shackleton and Walsh 1997).

Some of the same factors determining employment prospects for women also apply to off-the-job learning. Women face more of a hindrance to participation than men due to having children and other relatives to care for (Fraser and Ward 1988) and are, in consequence, unable to travel as far to institutions. Although not obvious in this study, men and women have been observed to participate in courses in different subject areas (NIACE 1994). Women generally study a more restricted range of subjects, such as education, biology, and humanities, while men dominate all other areas. Partly as a result of their more 'menial' work and lower pay, women are more likely to obtain lower levels of qualifications in programmes such as NVQ (Gleeson *et al.* 1996). Women are more likely to cite

domestic reasons for non-participation or drop-out, while men more frequently cite work reasons (DfEE 1997a). Men are more likely to drop out from courses (NIACE 1994).

On the other hand, women are more likely to gain an NVQ via government programmes-(Shackleton and Walsh 1997), and a recent report suggests that, in fact, women and men train equally often, but that women's episodes are briefer (DfEE 1997a).

Gender is one of the strongest predictors of participation in lifelong learning, and if it is a determinant it could be effective in several ways, perhaps in terms of opportunities or barriers, but a regular story which most dramatically displays the difference between men and women is a kind of enforced altruism (an example perhaps of what have been described by Rees *et al.* as socially constructed rationalities). For example:

[I left my first job as an analytical chemist because] the thing was my husband was in the air force you see so as soon as we got married we went to live in Germany and were just travelling around.... [I had no further jobs while married because] well we had the children you see and in those days people didn't. It was almost a in some spheres a slight on the husband implying that.... he couldn't support you.

This woman (B448), in her sixties, has since separated from her husband, taken a new career as a teacher with regular training, become an inspector of schools, and since retirement has taken classes in Welsh, Spanish, Antiques appreciation, and Bridge. She is therefore an 'ideal type' lifelong learner, thwarted earlier in

her trajectory by custom. It is clear from this story that gender is perhaps most significant in a relationship, as well as factor in its own right. Like the previous example, and many other lifelong learners, this woman has had a period away from South Wales.

As evidence that this altruistic phenomenon is still prevalent (although perhaps less widespread), a similar story was told by a woman in her twenties, who obtained a diploma in Business Studies (the first formal qualification in her family):

Well, I found work then. We moved away to Birmingham up there [as a management trainee], but Steve didn't like it up there. And he was promised a job back here, so we came back but it fell through and then the kids came along.

They are now living in the depressed mining valley of Blaenau Gwent, and her husband is still unemployed. The respondent (G9009) works part-time as a packer in a local factory, and helps voluntarily with a local playgroup where she is learning Welsh, and taking qualifications in child-care.

Parents

Family background, assessed in terms of income, parents education, or parents occupation is a key predictor of lifelong participation in education or training (as it is of success at school). In some periods and regions it may be the characteristics of the father which are dominant (cf. Gambetta 1987), and in others those of the mother (Bynner and Parsons 1997). In this study, the fathers occupation, and the mothers education and place of birth predominate, and there is no agreement with the finding of Gambetta (1987) that the significance of

parental education varies by occupational class. There is no evidence from this study that the UK is moving towards a 'classless' society, or that cycles of advantage and disadvantage are reducing. Reproduction is still a key factor, while a recent study of unemployment concluded that the link between household of origin and later occupational status may have actually strengthened since 1945 (Gershuny and Marsh 1994).

The interviews show how significant parents can be in setting an individual on course for a life of learning or its avoidance. Parents in the 1940s and 50s are often reported to have been concerned more with the outward appearance of school, to want their children to be as neat and tidy as possible, and to try and avoid 'the Board Man' coming to see them. Schooling itself and learning were not seen as important, and one reason may have been the ease with which jobs were available locally. One man [N195] left school at 14 with no qualifications, and went over to the local tin works, asked for a job and started the next Monday:

Interviewer: Can you remember what your parents' attitude was towards school?

N195: I don't think they cared one way or the other. They used to encourage you in as much as they would buy you.... the best clothes they could afford.... but once you left the house.... they wasn't worried until you came home then whether you'd been to school or not.... Myself, I couldn't have cared either way at that time whether I was learning or not. I just wasn't interested.

Although that story is a common one in the study, sometimes parents also reinforced the effect of other social determinants, such as gender. One woman [G613] had missed a lot of school through illness:

G613 It was really because you didn't grasp it like the others grasped it and I think I tend to do a lot of work backwards anyway so I see then backwards and I think 'I can't do this'. I don't know it and I get fed up of people telling me how bright my brother was and I couldn't do nothing. So, I thought why bother?

Interviewer: What about your mum and dad, what did they think about your education, did they push you?

G613: No. My mother's one of these old-fashioned type that a boy has got to do it but a girl is not important.

Even today, economic imperatives, but perhaps of a less urgent nature, may lie behind the stories of parents unwilling to see the value of further education. One man [B9982] is the son of another respondent in the study. Neither have any qualifications from school, nor any later education. Both later learnt a craft or 'trade', and both ended up in jobs not primarily involving that trade.

Interviewer: Did you enjoy it? [i.e. school]

B9982: Well... not really. I don't think any kid enjoys school really.... I didn't want to try the exams or anything. I just wanted to get out of school really.

Interviewer: What was your parents' reaction? [to wanting to leave]

B9982: I told my father I could stay on and play rugby for another year, and he said 'no'.

It is noteworthy that this man, like many others but unlike their own parents, now wants his children to gain some qualifications and perhaps stay on in education a little longer, even though he knows little about the opportunities available. This is apparently because the easy-to-get jobs have disappeared in the region - a very common theme. He describes himself rather unfairly as 'hypocritical' in this respect.

Religion

The role of religion as a potential determinant of participation in learning has been discussed elsewhere (Gorard *et al.* 1997d) and it has been shown that a non-conformist chapel background from South Wales or a non-Christian family religion are both predictors of greater participation in adult learning. One reason for this could be the increased and enthusiastic participation in education as a child reported by several such respondents at interview. For example:

If you want to know what my father wanted me to be, I got the name of Caron Wyn.... because he could always see it in that light. My father was secretary of the chapel, then he was deacon of the chapel.... I think he had visions that I would become a minister. He was never disappointed that I didn't mind but he always teased me - "y parch".... that's why he gave me the name.

I think the pressure is there. In a little village like where I come from.... I mean passing the 11 plus was a big thing.... if you failed the 11 plus you

were finished. It wasn't just [pressure from] parents with us, because when I was in Brynamman the difficulty I had was finding time to do homework believe it or not. There were so many things going on there it was unbelievable.

When I was in school we won the Urdd Eisteddfod play ten years on the trot.... Mind you look at the people we had there... We had debating societies every Monday and we had to prepare a speech.... It was a lovely place to grow up in. You were influenced by your peers as well not just your parents.... The only time I was ever locked in was to have piano lessons. I had recitation lessons.... my father decided I was going to have singing lessons.

And I think it held you in good stead later on.... you were never afraid to stand in front of an audience. I mean you did so much of it in chapel and in young people's and the Urdd.

Amman Valley Grammar school.... in those days produced teachers and preachers.

This respondent (B460) was a male educator and examiner in his fifties, who had been away to university and retained that early enthusiasm for learning and teaching throughout his life and tried to pass it on to his children. His story also illustrates the importance of initial schooling for the later trajectory, and since it is related to a selective system which has now disappeared, there is a period effect here as well. His stories of the activities available to children in his village

corroborate the secondary evidence presented elsewhere about the existence of micro-learning societies in the past (Gorard *et al.* 1997e)

Transitional participation

Transitional, not lifelong, learning has been the growth area in the last 50 years. For example, whereas a majority of 16 year-olds joined the labour market in 1978, by 1988 fewer than 20% moved directly from school to a job and nearly half stayed in education (Banks *et al.* 1992). Part of this is due to the appearance of training schemes such as YTS, but much more is due to changes in state benefits, and a lack of suitable jobs (in 1973 60% of males aged 16 or 17 and 55% of females were employed, but by 1985 these figures had dropped to 20% and 25%). Craft apprenticeships declined steadily, and the creation of TECs in 1988 spelt the end of a national training system [thereby enhancing the prospect of regional influences on participation]. Further (including sixth-form) and Higher Education are still the main growth areas today, while job-related training is relatively static (DfEE 1997a), although these, and other, figures may be distorted by an over-emphasis on certified courses. Many people stay in education solely because they cannot get a job (Gleeson *et al.* 1996), and more because their parents, who finance them, want them to.

High quality opportunities may be less common in the South Wales now, and even those who want to train themselves in the hope of finding a relevant job are discouraged by the implementation of current policies. The Principal of a local training and FE College, in place since the 1970s, summarises:

In 1978, when there was a well-established pattern for males of leaving school at 16 for one of the many apprenticeships in local industries, I went to a prize-giving at the Mond, and it was the first time that all apprentices were not guaranteed a job at the end.... perhaps 70 engineering apprentices in their first year, dropped to 14 in 1980s, with the introduction of YOPS, YTS etc., eating away at them. There was an attitude that manufacturing was passé in the 80s. It was dismantled and sent to the third world, while we should concentrate on value-added high tech stuff. Ripping wheezes were introduced at conference time every October, until the college suffered from initiative overload, meaning that more money was being spent on lower quality training. So the skills deficit started in the 80s. A white paper appeared then arguing that apprenticeships were not flexible enough, and emphasised time-serving. We agreed, but instead of introducing flexibility and fast-tracking, apprenticeships were dismantled. Now it is being re-introduced, and MAS is doing what we wanted in 1981/82, so 15 years have been wasted. A new development is that medium sized employers are being recruited to MAS, and so involved in training again rather than relying on poaching the market. These are the small suppliers to Fords and British Steel, with 20-30 workers.

I was on the Manpower Services Commission, but disagreed with their views. We did not want people to train just for stock, but we were resisted. You cannot rely on training just for what employers want in the middle of a depression. When the upturn came, there was a huge skills shortage, particularly at upper craft and technician level, which led to high wages and so inflationary pressure. Plenty of individuals were prepared to take

the risk of training for a job that did not exist yet, but employers and the MSC did not heed them.

Some companies train and some pay over the odds when they need skills. They tend to be smaller companies. Under the old system of levies and the industrial training boards, the levy paid to the board, e.g. in engineering, depended on number of employees and firms drew money back if they provided training. So part of the labour costs were training. By the mid '80s the mandatory levies were abolished as part of marketisation although the construction industry has continued on a voluntary basis.

I am very depressed about hounding of people who want to improve their employability while out of work. We see many examples of people who want to learn within the benefits system, where qualifications will improve their prospects, but the office seeks to simply take them off the register and this pressure is getting stronger. People are trapped in a *demi-monde* of low pay, low status. Whole host of people, apparently working within the benefits rules have their benefit stopped and although can appeal, they must therefore do without benefit for six months while appeal is held. Most of these in their early 30s, perhaps 80 per year hounded by the local office off the courses. We try to draw up learning agreements with them to take to the office to show that they are within the law and that it is understood that they will leave if a job comes up. Then, for example, the office rings a new clerk here and asks is this a full-time course, but full-time has various meanings, dependent on the context. They ask "are the people sitting next to you full-time students?" We have held seminars here with them to no

avail. Ironically, they can go on to YT which offers lower quality training and still receive benefits.

In broad summary, the present study suggests that those in previous generations who were non-participants, might in a present generation be transitional learners - taking a course soon after initial school but then never returning to formal education or training. One reason why this might be so was given by Hopper and Osborn (1975). They state that formal education is likely to cease after entry to the workforce for nearly everybody, and this is a function of the [then] current system. Those who are least successful in school are least able to continue, or where barriers are removed are least likely to want to continue. Those who are able to continue are likely to have had all the education that they want or need by the time they join the workforce. This front-loading of provision means that there should be few adult students and therefore little provision is made for them, so that there are in fact few adult learners. This analysis gives a clue to unravelling apparent evidence for the predictions of human capital theory. HCT predicts that most training for an individual will be early in their work career, since the returns on any 'investment' at a later date are lower (Tan and Peterson 1992). However, until it is clear that there are opportunities for all to train throughout their lives this assertion remains untested. The fact that most provision is currently front-loaded and that most participation is currently early in one's career cannot be used to deduce that either is the cause of the other.

The social determinants of transitional learning, of moving quickly from initial schooling to formal participation in further education or training, have also been described elsewhere (Gorard et al. 1997f). To a large extent, the same factors that are generally important in participation, such as age and gender, are still

important here. To these are added three measures relating to school-leaving age - whether the individual had regular or prolonged absences from school, whether they sat for any 16+ qualifications, which for most cohorts really means the same as whether they attended a selective school, and finally the number of children they had by the age of 16. The number of children may be a determinant of further participation - it is harder to study and look after a new child - or it may be a related but non-causal link in a typical trajectory of school, family, and part-time work (cf. Greenhalgh and Stewart 1987).

School

On the one hand, experience of initial school is an important marker for further study. A sense of failure at school has been found to reduce the chance of further education (Gambetta 1987), and in some cases gaining qualifications is an essential precursor to continuation. The probability of experiencing most kinds of training rises with school attainment (Tan and Peterson 1992). However, the clearest simple indicator of success at school is family background (Gorard 1997c), and a depressed social-class background not only reduces the chance of further education, it also interacts with failure at school (Gambetta 1987), such that those from poorer families may be less likely to compete for educational resources throughout their lives, if they face a problem. Some writers have suggested there may therefore be a cycle of disadvantage for an underclass excluded from formal settings as a result of their inadequate schooling, resulting from their background (e.g. Bynner and Parsons 1997). A study of the first cohort to stay in initial schooling until age 16 found that 50% had later problems with arithmetic, while 20% had problems with reading. It also suggests that few had taken any steps, even by the age of 37, to overcome these problems, and that the penalties for illiteracy were getting worse (Bynner and Parsons 1997).

The type of school attended (or not attended), the initial trajectory towards taking qualifications or getting out and getting a job, and in many cases particularly good or bad experiences of school are also associated with later attitudes to learning. For example, this man (G626) is now in his fifties, still living in the valleys, never been away, and now unemployed:

When it came to my 11 plus I was in a family that had nothing kind of thing, you know. I was in a very poor family. My father and mother was afraid in their hearts that I would pass for County school because it meant then that they would have to get me a uniform. Where I could go with the holes in the back of my trousers to an ordinary school. But then you had to have your books and your satchels and you know, so they kept me back from my 11 plus. I didn't go to school that day.

The female teacher described above (B448) had a very different experience. Although her parents had no higher qualifications themselves:

Well the thing is when I took this scholarship.... my parents were very very supportive. Yes, they thought it was wonderful.

Even in a comprehensive system of schooling, one's life chances of participation can be effectively determined by the end of initial schooling. For example:

Well I didn't take no exams at all because I wasn't very good in school.... When I left school then, I did the job I wanted was to be a care assistant.

But I 'cause I didn't get the papers.... because you had to have the papers and 'cause I as my mam said I was backward in my reading and writing.

This gentle 6'10" man in his thirties (G554), living with his mother who helped him during the interview, could only find temporary work as a night security guard for £1.50 per hour. He was saving up to take a course in adult care which he would probably never do since he was unable to read. He spent every holiday voluntarily caring for the residential disabled, or taking them on holiday. He fed them, dressed them and took them to the toilet, but he could not get the job he wanted since he had no qualifications and no chance of getting them.

The Head of a comprehensive school in one of the research sites had lived in the same area all of his life. His reminiscences provide another example of the view that recent increases in transitional participation and the consequent rise in qualification rates are more a consequence of the lack of suitable jobs than a desire by individuals to invest in their 'human capital':

I came from the Garw valley, a mining area. My father was a miner. Hard work. I and my friends and peers were encouraged to go elsewhere. "If you don't bloody work, you will end up down the mine". The kids at Ynysawdre School saw education as a route out of the harsh physical environment.... Now there is a southern drift in the valleys of an aspirant working class, and fewer job opportunities locally. The four mines operating in Garw have now closed. The hopes and expectations of young people have changed. Now there is a kind of "nihilism".

Later participation

The social determinants of later participation - education or training after full-time continuous education is over - have been described elsewhere (Gorard *et al.* 1997f). They are, to a large extent, the same as the general determinants of lifelong learning, such as age and gender, but to these are added the occupational class of significant people in an individual's life, the geographical mobility of the individual and their family, and the age at which they had their first child. Perhaps these additional factors are part of the reason why this study is only in partial agreement with an apparent consensus that early educational experiences determine later ones - "if at first you don't succeed, you don't succeed" (Tuckett 1997). While this may be true in the determination of transitional learning, it is clearly not so with respect to later learning, especially job-related training. In fact, using earlier patterns of participation as a predictor for later learning does not improve the accuracy of the model at all. Therefore participation *per se* is not a good predictor of more participation. To a large extent, the determinants of any period of participation are the same as the determinants of the next but weaker, while the differences are chiefly of a motivational nature (see below).

This study with its retrospective lifetime perspective has therefore begun to answer questions that have been posed by previous studies (e.g. whether training leads to better employment prospects and further training) but unanswered due to lack of a long-term perspective (Dolton *et al.* 1994) or the difficulty of isolating the confounding variables (Main and Shelly 1990). Studies of the effect of learning/training on employment and income are relatively common - for example the DfEE (1995) estimated that one third of those leaving Training for Work schemes and half who left Youth Training in 1994 were employed 6

months later - but these studies seldom consider the impact of learning on learning. The example cited is also flawed in not giving background figures for comparison - what proportion of those who refused to take part in schemes were also in work 6 months later, how long did the jobs last, and were those who did take part in schemes self-selected in terms of cultural/social background?

Trenaman effect

In an analogous way to the description that the most important influence determining an individual's unemployment in any year is unemployment in the previous years (Gershuny and Marsh 1994), the 'Trenaman effect' assumes that longer initial education will lead to subsequent adult participation (Daines *et al.* 1982). It is true that initial education has grown in inclusiveness and duration in the period of this study, but it is not true that participation in later learning has increased in anything like the same proportion. The Education Act 1944 may have been a factor in the limited growth of adult education, but there is no clear evidence either way. As shown above, the UK has a peculiarly front-loaded form of provision. Compared to the USA, for example, more British males receive training immediately after school, but this figure gets proportionately less with every year out of school until the US cohorts have overtaken them (Tan and Peterson 1992). In fact, and in contradiction of human capital theory, those with longer initial education are less likely to obtain an NVQ for example which may be a kind of compensation (Shackleton and Walsh 1997), and this is one reason why early participation is not necessarily a good indicator of later. This finding resonates well with the discovery by Gambetta (1987) of a form of natural selection in lifetime educational choices. Those who struggle to continue in education at one transitional stage find it easier to continue at the next decision

point, but not the one after that. Not all levels of choice (e.g. for FE or HE) are the same, or could be expected to have the same determinants.

Occupational class

It might be seen as surprising that current occupation or social class does not appear as a general determinant of later learning, since the correlation between occupation type and training is well-established. The point made here is that when the independent variables are fed into the model in life-span order from birth to the current position, occupation is not a key predictor of any variance left unexplained by earlier events, such as qualification at age 16. Such a finding is in agreement with that of Greenhalgh and Stewart (1987) that those people already qualified are more likely to receive further training. For example, although professionals may be more likely than other workers to undertake voluntary adult education, the DfEE (1995) estimate that over 60% of professionals have a degree-level qualification from their full-time continuous education, whereas over 70% of plant and machine operatives have no qualification higher than a GCSE.

Of course, the social determinants of early educational trajectories (Gorard 1997c) and of transition to work mean that occupation has been found in other studies to be strongly related to later participation. In this study, occupation (net of background determinants) is really only a good indicator of on-the-job training which is itself difficult to predict using other social factors (see Appendix). Those with higher occupational status (cf. Greenhalgh and Stewart 1987), and those working in the public sector, or in larger firms (cf. Tan and Peterson 1992) are more likely to receive job-related training. They still tend to be younger and already better qualified (DfEE 1997a). Occupation also affects

the type of training one receives, the choice of content where it is available (NIACE 1994), and the type of qualifications available at the end (Felstead 1996). Therefore changes in patterns of employment will affect patterns of participation as much as changes in education policy and provision do. Since 1979 for example, the number of skilled workers needed in traded goods have dropped sharply, and the introduction of technology such as computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) has added to the loss of specific jobs (Greenhalgh and Mavrotas 1994). Places for plant and machine operatives have declined most sharply. Newer jobs have appeared at senior or highly-skilled levels, and in distribution and services. This may be partly why employers feel that the skills needed by the average employee are increasing (DfEE 1997a), and why unemployment and inactivity has risen for men, while participation has risen for women (DfEE 1997a). However, some doubts have been cast on the size of the apparent skills shortfall in South Wales (Gorard *et al.* 1997e) and there are similar doubts about the 'upskilling' and multiskilling of the workforce in one of the largest employers remaining in one research site. Their training manager, who has been in the plant since 1960, relates:

Over the past years our operators have started taking on very basic duties normally undertaken by maintenance, nothing earth-shattering, lubrication and changing hoses.... It sounds great when you get to cut numbers out of the system and have these all-singing all-dancing teams. Whether it works in real life I don't know. You have to make sure you don't dilute skills. Multiskilling can also mean skills dilution. You can't expect to have a guy that's fully qualified as a craftsman, that has the experience of operating a line like some of these older guys have. They [the older operatives] really know how a line works with listening for a noise. They are so skilled and

their experience is so vast that you can't expect them to become fully *au fait* with the craft scene.

There were 12 to 15 people in the education department here in the '70s but a much bigger intake and our own on-site apprentice training school, a centre of excellence which was the envy of all - not just locally. That was closed six years ago. Now there are only three people in the department.... we use the College a lot more. There has been a shift in the length of production apprenticeships from five to three years. Some colleagues claim that the College is not doing the job half as well and are prepared to substantiate their views, for example by putting college trainees through trade tests, and the results led to very drastic comments about the quality of training. Traditionalists felt that it was essential for a lad to spend six weeks learning how to file straight and they want to keep this.... Nowadays the craftsmen are replacers of parts not fixers of parts. New or unusual parts used to be made on site, and the gang could copy or invent parts given a little time. Now we buy in expertise, so there is actually a loss of flexibility in the workforce.

Ethnicity

The role of recent minority ethnic background has been described elsewhere (Gorard et al. 1997d). The variation in South Wales in this respect is too limited to be of general use as an explanation. However, the data available supports that of Tan and Peterson (1992). Once other factors are taken into account, non-whites are at least as likely to participate in training as whites. In areas other than employer-provided training non-whites may be more likely to participate (cf. Shackleton and Walsh 1997). The study therefore disagrees with the findings of

Greenhalgh and Stewart (1987) in this respect. The evidence also disagrees with that of Gambetta (1987) who found that migrants from Southern Italy to the study area were less likely to continue education after school. In this study, immigration and mobility are key indicators of prolonged educational participation for the few that it concerns.

Leisure activities

The role of leisure interests as the mark of a learner is an interesting one. The absence of hobbies requiring sustained study or practice correlates strongly with non-participation in education and training. One respondent [G626] has already been quoted on the demotivating input from his parents while at school. It is perhaps no surprise that he cannot initially understand the concept of learning for interest or leisure:

You said about education, about getting qualifications.... I might fall into something that I would really love... but you asked me about getting education.... which I think would be a foolish thing for me to do really.... It's still a waste of time as far as I'm concerned. You seen them on the news like that woman of 70 or 80 getting a degree or something. What for, like? You know, what for? She has wasted hours.... to go and do something like that at her age is a waste of a couple of years of her life.

On the other hand, leisure interests can mark someone who has not participated in much formal institutional learning. One man [G716] who did not attend school regularly, left without qualification as soon as possible and worked in the local mine until he got 'blown up'. He describes moving from job to job - technical drawing, chargehand, airborne division, foundry, building site, carpentry, British

Rail shunter, fitter, security guard - with minimal training. He is one of the 'common sense' school of learners (see below on autodidacts). An extract from his leisure interests on reading gives a flavour of his story:

Er, I've gone right through the Second World War, nearly every conflict or campaign that was gone through like. You see what they write and every writer has a different version of it.... I mean to say you read one book about Lord Mountbatten and how marvellous he was. When you read eight books.... the other seven there's little bits in them and when you add them together he was a complete prat.

Learner identities

An individual's position within the social-structure of the determinants of participation - the objective opportunities available to particular social groups at particular places and times - is located chiefly by their personal characteristics - age, gender, and family background. The 1982 ACACE survey suggested that the ability to take up opportunities was affected by personal motivation and individual circumstance, as well as by individuals' knowledge of and the availability of learning opportunities (Sargant 1996). Being a learner has therefore been described as a 'praxis' (Mezrow 1990). However, at least one other possibility is emerging. As predicted in Gorard *et al.* (1997c), there are some individuals who do not fit a general theory of early determinants since their will to act comes from a crisis in their later life. Their motivation may be dispositional (Edwards *et al.* 1993), of the type which tends to be the most underestimated by survey-type methods (Harrison 1993).

Although many studies have identified a vocational strand of motivation as dominant in participation (e.g. NIACE 1994), this may be as much a product of their focus as of reality. By considering only a narrow range of formal learning some studies may introduce variable-selection bias, making some forms of motivation appear more important by ignoring others, or by offering respondents a choice of reasons from a limited pre-determined list (cf. Gorard 1997d). A study by the Employment Department for example necessarily focuses attention on work-related training, so that when such a study finds that the main reasons to study are to increase job satisfaction for those in work, to help get a job for those not in work, or to change their job for those prepared to fund themselves (Park 1994), these motives must be seen as only a fraction of those actually providing adult learners with the will to act. Much adult learning is self-planned, deliberate, and motivated by curiosity, interest and enjoyment as much as practical considerations (Sargant 1996). Part of the reason for the apparent disagreement between the economists' view of learning and others is that "public" learning, the focused of this study, is only the tip of the iceberg. Even more is due to the credentialist mentality of analysts who apparently do not value adult learning unless it leads to formal qualification. National Education and Training Targets miss the point, since they are blind to informal learning which may stem from borrowing a book or watching television (THES 1997). Many people have a vast experience of learning in different jobs, but no qualifications [although NVQs may be beginning to have an impact here].

Autodidacts

Several respondents created a problem for a typology of learners based on participation in formal training episodes by displaying a willingness and ability to

learn outside of such episodes. One, a woman in her 50s (B9983), who left school at 15 with her parent's blessing and had no lifetime qualifications, had this to say of her jobs in haberdashery:

Once you learnt how to do things, it was more or less all the same.... What you done, you done your training for a month of how to sew and this that and the other and used heavy machines that was it. You didn't get no more training again....I mean the thing is I can go right through from a complete suite from the arms, backs, outside backs, cushions, front borders, seats, so I mean you know through the years I mean you know you pick it up.

A man in his 60s (G563) left school at 14 chiefly for economic reasons, like so many others. Asked why left he school at 14.

My father was mining underground. He had six months off, he went back for another month, and of course there was no dole or anything in those days and myself and my sister still at home.... Then I took this job. Didn't earn a lot of money but of course anything in those days was better than what we had.

He also had no lifetime qualifications, but had a very successful career in British Steel Tinplate, being promoted several times and moving between areas of work, having received no formal training in his account.

You learn as you get along.... You got to train yourself and you use your hands and ears. No one came along and said, you mustn't do this or you mustn't do that.... I mean common sense will tell you not to do certain

things.... I can pick up most things purely by someone else doing it.... I did my own wiring in my house [a smart house on the edge of the Brecon Beacons].

Another man in his 50s (G621) who worked for the same company all of his life, is genuinely multi-skilled at plastering, electrical work, welding, galvanising, and market gardening. He enjoyed his time at school but still left at 15 without qualifications. He has since had few years without either work-based training or voluntary adult education courses. On the availability of the latter formal opportunities he says:

I took the number, phoned the number, and yeah come on now, so I went down and found it and joined up. I think it's there if you look for them.

He does not see learning as simply to do with his job. It is also to do with his hobbies and it is here that he can be classified as an autodidact:

Well you come here and have a look. There are 7,000 plants down there now I've got [in back garden of terraced house].... They're all bedding plants. I like doing bedding plants.... I do have a fish pond and I like doing the garden. Give me a month's time now and all that there will.... all be full of flowers.

and

I might go back to do bricklaying [after retirement]. I enjoy bricklaying you know.

He has taught himself from books and magazines from the library as well as paying to attend classes fitting around his shifts at work. He and his wife support local opera and drama groups and have been instrumental in helping their son into university (the first undergraduate in his family). He has attempted qualifications when they have been available for courses, mainly for his own self-respect:

Because I think if I've got to go there and I've got to pay why not do something at the end of it even if I ain't got no use for it.... I don't see no point in going, going there like and not taking anything at the end of it even if you fail.

Conclusion

Although studies have shown that people generally believe that there are ample opportunities to participate in learning (e.g. Park 1994), it is also clear that this belief is an overview, unconnected to their specific needs, and it may chiefly concern the opportunities for others. The position may be like that of diners in a restaurant who can see that the menu is very long, even though what any individual actually wants may not be available. The notion that the desperate need is for vocational training, the emphasis on the economy, the over-emphasis on qualifications, and the attempts to make current provision more open to all may be taking attention away from other major unmet needs for education and training. Such needs may be specific and practical such as welfare rights, tenants groups and democratic participation (Fraser and Ward 1988) or more general

self-development or everyday living (although this was not a theme that commonly emerged at interview). The long-term unemployed in this study, and those who come to the end of their working lives due to illness clearly do not want vocational training, nor do they want qualifications.

Inequality in society will not be lessened significantly by dealing with people themselves, or training them, or more of them (Hodkinson *et al.* 1996). Whether they get a job depends chiefly on the businesses and the government to provide economic success. However, not everyone, nor indeed every state, can have that full 'success'. In the global market, success is relative and may be serendipitous to some extent. If the focus of economic development moves away from the North Atlantic area, as it previously did from the Mediterranean, societies here will need alternative and more mature views of education for life. Ameliorating inequalities in society directly, by redistributive taxation perhaps, will make alternative learning trajectories available to wider participation (since their determinants are primarily social). This may have a beneficial effect on training, jobs and the economy, but it is worth doing even if not.

Educators and trainers have a role to play in such long-term societal reform, as concerned citizens and voters, but there is also an urge to act now, to decide on the best time to intervene (e.g. Maguire *et al.* 1993). As argued empirically elsewhere (e.g. Gorard *et al.* 1997f), educators can make more of a difference by addressing the determinants of later participation, which are more susceptible to change, than the determinants of early participation. This is not to say that breaking down barriers to participation and constraints on action is ineffective. The rise in the real cost of fees for adult education from 1976-1981 was accompanied by a drop in numbers for example (Daines *et al.* 1982), and students

were not prepared to travel as far as previously despite more having their own vehicles. Barriers are especially important where they impede full rather than nominal participation, and these are chiefly to do with the character of the course on offer (see above). The decision to participate or not is asymmetric, heavily loaded against participation. To decide not to participate is sufficient to achieve its objective, the decision to participate must be constantly reaffirmed by action. This is one major reason why considerations of access do not lead to a complete solution. If rational thought and action are the goals of adult education (Mezrow 1990), participation is part of the goal, so that learning must come to be seen more naturally as an outcome in itself, and less as a process leading towards some half-glimpsed economic benefit.

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Notes

¹ In a way such arguments are like those surrounding the introduction of 'uncertainty' in quantum mechanics. The universe can be seen as random, with apparent patterns really spurious, or it can be seen as causal while as yet imperfectly understood. However, random and causal events cannot meaningfully interact, since for an event to have a cause makes it non-random, and for a cause

to be randomly determined itself would make its effect random also. To assume that both mechanisms exist but never interact is to create two separate universes, one of which is unnecessary.

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APPENDIX - Disaggregating the trajectories

The original 11 lifetime learning trajectories have been collapsed for most analyses, to increase the cell sizes in cross-tabulations, and to make the frequencies of each trajectory (the dependent variable in regression) as balanced as possible. However, it is possible that important insights are lost when types and sources of training are aggregated (cf. Tan and Peterson 1992), and this section contains a report of an analysis that takes account of two different types of learning experience - those that take place as part of, or because of, a job and those that do not. The first type is therefore job-related training, and the second type includes academic further and higher education, as well as liberal adult education classes. The frequency of each type appears in Table 1.

Table 1 - Frequency of each learning route

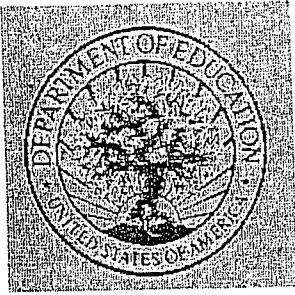
	Transitional		Later	
	frequency	%	frequency	%
None	500	46	684	63
Academic	285	26	224	21
Job-related	242	22	117	11
Both	64	6	66	6

The multinomial logistic regression model was recalculated for both types of learning compared to non-participation for both transitional and later experiences. In summary, predictions of transitional episodes are much more reliable than those of later episodes, and predictions of academic and leisure learning are more accurate than those of job-related training. Neither type of episode is itself a good predictor of further episodes (of either type). Presumably the overall model is as accurate as it is since it contains more cases per cell on which to base estimates, and because transitional academic learning accounts for

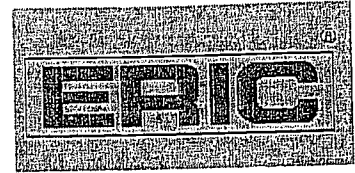
such a high proportion of all lifetime learning episodes. The determinants of each type of learning appear in Table 2, and their roles are as described in the paper above.

Table 2 - Determinants by type and stage of participation

	Transitional	Transitional	Later	Later
	Job-related	Academic	Job-related	Academic
Religion	y	y	y	y
Mother area	y	y	y	y
Qualification	y	y	y	y
Occupation	y	y	y	y
Age	y	y	y	
Gender	y		y	y
Father qualif	y	y	y	
School		y	y	y
Father class	y			y
Mother class		y	y	
Father area	y	y		
Leisure			y	y
No of moves			y	y
Area			y	y
Place of birth		y		
Language				y
No of children		y		



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